



## Community buys new equipment and reassurance

Community donations have bought equipment that will ensure more Horsham acute patients can be cared for at home.

For the first time, the Grampians Health At Home medical team have access to their own portable ECG unit and a portable bladder scanner so they can monitor their patients in their own home.

Grampians Health At Home is an alternative to an in-hospital stay, providing acute admitted care in the comfort of the patient's home.

Patients are still regarded as hospital patients and remain under the care of their hospital doctor.

"In the past, we had to borrow this equipment from the acute ward which wasn't ideal because they might need to use the items at the same time," Horsham Grampians Health At Home Coordinator Janet Johnson said.

"Now that we have these items, we hope to take the pressure off in-patient services and outpatient continence services as well.

Grampians Health's Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said the purchase of the vital new equipment was a great example of the importance of community donations.

"It just proves that every contribution, no matter what size, can help us deliver care that is responsive to local community needs." Mr Kelly said.

*Grampians Health At Home nurses: Jodi King, Janet Johnson and Zoe Frew with the portable bladder scanner and ECG.*

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We are committed to working with the communities in which we live and we value your feedback.

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Please also contact us if changes are required to your contact details.





*Dr Peter Carter in the Horsham Emergency Department with Nurse Unit Manager Rebecca Bolzon.*

## Head of ED committed to expanding

The new Head of the Emergency Department (ED) at Horsham wants to increase the medical capability of the department.

Dr Peter Carter wants to improve the quality of the decision making as well as the diagnostic skill and the accuracy that is provided to ED patients.

"My priority is to expand the capability of the facility and eventually its physical footprint, so we can provide better care for emergencies presenting at Horsham," Peter said.

"Part of our plan is to develop our ED into a training department. It already has a training role for students but we want to expand it to be training emergency doctors as part of their accredited training.

"Until recently the department has been heavily reliant on locum doctors and junior doctors rotating from Melbourne.

"While they still provide an important and valued service, we have started to appoint more senior and permanent staff.

"We now have seven emergency specialists who are regularly working at Horsham ED. These are experienced doctors who have completed a minimum of six years of rigorous training in managing emergency conditions.

"We also have the assistance of an emergency Telehealth service to support decision making overnight.

Peter said he was impressed with the quality of medical equipment available in Horsham's ED.

**"The support from community groups toward the ED team, especially by donating funds for equipment used here, is very special and we are fortunate that these groups recognise the importance of the work that we do here."**

"We are constantly needing to upgrade equipment so we are using the latest technology available to deliver care that is responsive to community needs."

Peter has a strong connection to the local community, having been born and raised in Hopetoun. He worked as a GP in Stawell for 15 years before training as an Emergency Specialist in Melbourne where he spent a further 15 years at various hospital emergency departments.

Grampians Health's Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said Peter's appointment to the Horsham campus was an important one for the region.

"Peter's medical leadership is an important attribute that will help build the service in delivering safe, connected and person-centred care. His appointment is a perfect example of how we are growing capability to deliver services to the Horsham region."



*Claire McKenry is pictured with her artwork that is on display outside her room at Kurrajong Lodge.*

## Claire walks up a century

**Kurrajong Lodge resident Claire McKenry walked to her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations on August 11.**

*Claire and Kurrajong Lodge Nurse Unit Manager Ingrid Tudias appreciate Claire's artwork.*

Although requiring a walking aid these days, Claire is still very active and enjoys walking around the Care Community facility each day.

Claire was born in Sydney and moved to Geelong when she was 10. She was a teenager when the Second World War began. Those days are forever ingrained in Claire's memories.

"Geelong was full of soldiers from when the submarines would come into the bay there," Claire said.

Claire worked for the State Electricity Commission and she met her future husband Doug who lived nearby in Geelong.

After they married, Doug and Claire moved to their home on the shoreline of Lake Toolondo where they mainly farmed sheep and raised three boys. Claire has been a keen artist since she was young and likes to paint in water colours.

She has many of her paintings on display in and outside her room. Her favourite is a painting of Lake Toolondo with her and Doug fishing from a boat.

Since moving into Kurrajong Lodge six years ago, Claire still works on her art but draws mainly with coloured pens or pencils.

Claire said she really enjoyed living in Kurrajong Lodge.

"I can just sit down at the table and enjoy a nice meal each time and I don't have to do anything."





# Faster assessments for trauma patients

Assessing trauma patients at Wimmera Hospital's Emergency Department has been made easier and quicker thanks to the latest donations from the Horsham branch of the Blue Ribbon Foundation (BRF).

The BRF team have used the funds raised from past events to purchase a portable curvilinear ultrasound probe and a tonometer.

Horsham's Acting ED Nurse Unit Manager Kaylene Schultz said the portable ultrasound probe allowed for a more immediate assessment of vital organs.

"Now that we have a portable unit, it will make an incredible difference and we are grateful to the Blue Ribbon committee for their support," Kaylene said.

Blue Ribbon Foundation Horsham President Paul Margetts said his committee were pleased to be able to provide such vitally important equipment.



Blue Ribbon Foundation Horsham President Paul Margetts is pictured being shown the donated items by ED Registered Nurse Taylor and Acting Nurse Unit Manager Kaylene Schultz.

## Betty finds comfort from Hospice support

Horsham grandmother Betty Etherton is thankful for the simple items that make her daily activities easier, and she is especially thankful to Wimmera Hospice Auxiliary for those items.

Betty was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2019 and for the past three years she has been in the care of the palliative team based at Wimmera Cancer Centre.

She is gradually losing her strength and finds simple activities like getting in and out of bed much harder to do now.

Betty said she was grateful for the care she was receiving and for the support from the Hospice Auxiliary.



**“I was supposed to be dead two years ago, but here I am still living independently and the equipment provided by the palliative care team has made that possible.”**

"It's made things a lot better for me to stay at home and I'm trying to do that for as long as possible."

Palliative Care Nurse Jody Membrey said the equipment was completely funded by Wimmera Hospice Auxiliary.

"Betty is mainly using basic tools of support but for her they are providing a great deal of comfort and making her every day life much easier and more practical," Jody said.

"The items she probably uses the most are a bed stick, an overbed table and an adjustable chair but she also has a wheelchair and a commode on hand when needed."



# Independent renal hub status advances kidney care

Our organisation has transitioned to become an independent renal hub, marking a significant milestone in the delivery of care for those with chronic kidney disease across the region.

Previously operating as satellite services of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, renal units in Ballarat, and Horsham will now be managed directly by Grampians Health, allowing for expanded services and improved patient outcomes.

This transition is driven by a commitment to providing high-quality, effective, and consistent care closer to home for patients living with kidney diseases and ailments.

The new hub status enables us to significantly enhance the medical and nursing capabilities in renal medicine, introduce

surgical services for renal patients, and increase the number of specialist nursing roles to support those with advanced kidney ailments.

"Becoming an independent renal hub means we can deliver more responsive, locally managed care that reflects the needs of our patients and supports our dedicated staff," said Chief Executive Officer Dale Fraser.

It's about putting people first and making sure they receive the best possible care, close to home."

As part of its role as a renal hub, we will be responsible for home dialysis services for patients across the region. A dedicated regional coordinator is being introduced to streamline treatment pathways and support patients living with chronic kidney disease in regional communities.

**"This is a major step forward in how we care for people in our region,"**  
– CEO Dale Fraser.

"Becoming an independent hub service means we can now be responsible for managing all the components of our renal services—staffing, equipment, and clinical decisions—and focus on delivering high quality renal and dialysis care across the region," said Dr David Langsford, General Manager – Medical and Clinical Programs.

"Being an independent hub allows for more agile responses to patient needs, better integration with other local health services, and a stronger focus on continuity of care across Stawell, Edenhope, Horsham and Ballarat."



Fresenius Medical Care Australia clinical sales specialist Rachael Clarke and Dialysis Nurse in Charge Je Vic Solante with one of the new machines.



# Palliative patients wrapped in care

Horsham Patchwork Quilters Group has thrown its support behind the Wimmera's palliative care patients for the second year in a row.

What began with a simple inquiry last year, has developed into an annual contribution to the Grampians Health Palliative Care team.

The group donated a variety of quilts that were much appreciated by their recipients. The small hard-working group then committed to contributing quilts annually and this year have donated 17 quilts for distribution to palliative patients.

Palliative Care Nurses Deb Funcke and Jody Membrey thanked the patchwork quilt group for their wonderful contribution.

"Because of their hard work, we are able to provide each patient with an extensive selection of quilts so they can choose something that feels personal to them," Deb said.

"For personal reasons, families like to keep the quilts after their loved one has passed so it's reassuring to know we always have a healthy supply of them and we are very grateful to you all."

Jody said her team took pictures of each quilt pattern donated and kept them in an album so patients can easily choose the design that feels right for them.

Horsham Patchwork Quilters Group President Lea Crammond said the group would meet regularly at Horsham Library to make the quilts.

"We have a lot of fun making them and the importance they make for the recipients is not lost on us one bit," Lea said.

"Many of the group has been touched by the need for palliative care among their family or friends and it's a privilege for us to do this."



Horsham patchwork quilters Faye Woodhart, Isabelle Martin and Christine Gerditz show their handiwork to Palliative Nurses Jodie Membrey, left and Deb Funcke, right.

## September is Sexual Health Month

There's a lot more to sexual health than just sex – it's also about having open conversations about your health.

This month we're encouraging the community to shed any embarrassment or shame and to talk about their sexual health. This includes asking for a sexual health check (including STI testing) at least once a year.

We're also advocating for the 4Cs of safer sex – **Communication, Consent, Contraception and Condoms:**

- Communication – Talk openly with your partner(s) about sexual health and pleasure.
- Consent – Take steps to check that everyone involved is freely agreeing to each sexual activity.
- Contraception – Take steps to avoid getting pregnant, or getting someone else pregnant, unless you both want to.
- Condoms – Use protection to reduce the risk of STIs and unintended pregnancy.

Make the right decisions for you by talking to someone you trust. Sex should be enjoyable. Safer sex means sexual contact when you and your partner(s) are ready. Any form of sex needs to be consensual, and you should feel respected and protected.



# Staff dominate RFDS scholarship awards

Two of our staff members have recently won highly coveted scholarships from the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

Horsham Enrolled Nurse Tammy McDonald and Ballarat Program Assistant Chloe James both won the scholarships to support their nursing studies. Adding to their achievement is the fact that only four scholarships were awarded to nurse trainees in Victoria for 2025.

The RFDS Give Them Wings scholarships provide one-off financial assistance and offer students the opportunity to spend a week with the Flying Doctor or take a work experience trip by air.

The scholarship program encourages students to seek employment in regional or rural towns upon graduation, putting their vital skills to work in communities that need it the most.

An Enrolled Nurse at our Horsham campus, Tammy has already gained success in her role having been recently awarded Federation University TAFE's Trainee of the Year and followed that up with the ANMF Student of the Year.

Tammy is now studying her Bachelor of Nursing and has already received distinctions during her studies.

"I'm really enjoying nursing and when I finish my Graduate Year, I want to further my studies to either work in Theatre as a peri-operative nurse or to qualify as a midwife," Tammy said.

Chloe James currently works as a program assistant with the Allied Health team at our Ballarat campus and is studying her Bachelor of Nursing.

Chloe said her true passions are in health research and rural and remote nursing.

"I never expected to see so much impressive work done in smaller hospitals but the research happening at Grampians Health is incredible. That is definitely the driving factor and I'd like to be a part of that work.

"Rural and remote nursing is my goal. I've visited a lot of remote settings in recent years and I find the common theme among those communities is they don't have doctors or clinicians.

"Nurses that work in those communities get to be a 'jack of all trades'. They go out to emergencies and they help people the way a paramedic would," Chloe said.

Tammy and Chloe were among 160 applicants to apply for the scholarships in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the Give Them Wings program.

Of the 10 scholarships awarded, four were for Bachelor of Nursing studies, five are studying medicine and one is studying a Bachelor of Paramedicine.



Dr Senator Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP and RFDS Victoria CEO Dr Michael Ben-Meir present the awards to Tammy (pictured left) and Chloe (pictured right).



# Sandy helps spread the support

Support for our First Nations people has been extended with the appointment of Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, Sandy Stinten.

Working alongside colleague Danae McDonald, Sandy will help to provide support to patients, clients and team members in Horsham, Dimboola, Edenhope and Stawell.

The proud Gunai/Kurnai woman said she has settled into the role quickly, and has felt very welcomed by the community.

"It's a great role and I'm really enjoying it," Sandy said. "Danae and I are sharing the travelling so that we are both a constant presence at each of the campuses every week.

"Even the trips to Edenhope have been good because while there are not many First Nations people living there, a few team members at the campus are and they have appreciated the visits and the connection."

Sandy said she was impressed with the community space in Horsham and with the work Danae had been doing.

Danae said the appointment of Sandy was important in helping to extend their support.

"We've been working in well together and Sandy has settled in comfortably with her role," Danae said.

"Sandy's inclusion has meant that for the first time, we've been able to provide comprehensive support to First Nations people at every Grampians Health campus," Chief People Officer Claire Woods said.

"The work that our Aboriginal Liaison Health Officers do is crucial to our First Nations people's continuity of care."

Danae and Sandy are based in Horsham from Monday to Friday, 8:30AM - 4:30PM. They provide support to our other campuses throughout the week and can be contacted on **0403 556 517** or **0475 420 398**.



Danae McDonald and Sandy Stinten in the Community Space at Wimmera Base Hospital.

## Foundation buys bladder scanner



The purchase of a new bladder scanner will improve the comfort of rehabilitating patients at Horsham.

WHCG Foundation has provided the bladder scanner which is a portable ultrasound device that allows a non-invasive method of measuring the volume of urine in the bladder.

The device can also be used to assess a patient's ability to empty their bladder and help diagnose conditions like urinary retention.

Wyuna Nurse Unit Manager Kerri Chamberlain was very thankful to the foundation for the scanner.

"This scanner enables us to monitor the volume of urine patients are retaining in their bladder," Kerri said. "Retention can be uncomfortable if left untreated and a scanner is the easiest way to check.

WHCG Foundation Director Tim Hopper said his organisation was pleased to be able to support Wyuna with the purchase.

"Every piece of equipment or capital improvement purchased by the foundation is strictly for either the Horsham or Dimboola campuses of Grampians Health."





*Patient Ida with her support specialists Dietitian Olivia Dunstan, Stomal Therapy Nurse Bernadette Beahan, GH at Home Nurse Janet Johnson and GH at Home GP Dr Shyann Kumar.*

## ‘Ostomateship’ is vital

Horsham-based Stomal Therapy Nurse Bernadette Beahan wants to particularly thank those who support her role.

“An ostomate is someone who has a stoma, which is a surgically created opening in the digestive or urinary system,” Bernadette said.

“There are several scenarios for an individual to require a stoma. In instances of bowel or bladder cancer it may be necessary for a surgeon to insert an artificial

opening on the wall to the abdomen to collect waste.

“There are different types of stomas, and the types depend on the location and manner of surgery along the digestive or urinary tract.”

Bernadette provides specialist care and support to patients from across the Wimmera Mallee in the management of their stoma.

Whether it is a temporary or permanent stoma, Bernadette provides practical and emotional

support with the ultimate goal that they don’t just adapt but learn to thrive and participate in their usual activities.

“Of course I can’t do that without support,” she said.

“I want to acknowledge the substantial contribution made by my colleagues for their expertise and care.

“And more importantly is the contribution and support given by family and carers to their loved ones living with a stoma.”

Grampians Health has employment opportunities across each of our campuses  
Discover employee benefits and career opportunities

[grampianshealth.org.au/careers](https://grampianshealth.org.au/careers)







*Paul Margetts, centre, is pictured with Detective Sergeant Jake Ferguson and Inspector Tony Combridge APM after their Inside Story presentations.*

## Record funds for Crime Night

A record crowd enjoyed presentations from two of Victoria's leading detectives during Blue Ribbon Foundation (BRF) Horsham's annual Inside Story event in August. BRF Horsham President Paul Margetts hosted the evening at Horsham's Harvest Church and announced the committee's newest fundraising project.

"We are kickstarting our newest campaign with the money we raise from tonight so we can purchase a Hamilton Ventilator for Grampians Health Horsham's Emergency Department," Paul said.

"There is now a need to upgrade the old Hamilton Ventilator in Horsham's ED. This device is used to provide respiratory support for a wide range of patients including neo-natal."

The record crowd ensured the event's biggest ever return with \$8000 being raised on the evening.

"We were fortunate to have two great speakers in Inspector Tony Combridge APM and Detective Sergeant Jake Ferguson who were highly entertaining despite the dark subject of the crimes involved," Paul said.

## Old IV pumps given new life at Fed Uni

In a win for both education and the environment, 20 IV pumps and poles that could no longer be used at our Horsham campus have been gifted to nursing students at Federation University.

The donation is part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability – ensuring equipment is recycled and repurposed where possible, rather than sent to landfill.

Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier said she was pleased that this multidisciplinary approach would maximise the lifecycle of resources and minimise waste.

"We are extremely pleased to donate the equipment which will now allow every nursing student in the classroom to have access to their own IV pumps for hands-

on training in the simulated clinical environment."

Environmental Sustainability Officer Sam Harris said the donation was a great example of sustainable thinking in action and a positive outcome for students and the environment.



*Clinical Nurse Educator EN Traineeships (West) Susan Roberts, Federation University Assistant Discipline Lead Diploma of Nursing Gab McCulloch, Federation University TAFE Teacher Nursing Jane Dunn and Engineering Services Leading Hand Adam Simmons.*



# New national initiative to improve cancer care for rural and remote Australians



*Sue Bartlett, Oncology Nurse Practitioner, Catherine Hanns, Social Worker, and Carmel O'Kane, Cancer Nurse Practitioner and Manager of the Wimmera Cancer Centre.*

People living in rural and remote Australia experience poorer cancer outcomes compared to those in metropolitan areas, yet no dedicated optimal care pathway exists for this priority population.

The ECORRA OCP (Equitable Cancer Outcomes across Rural and Remote Australia – Optimal Care Pathways) project, led by Professor Anna Ugalde, is a collaboration between the Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research within the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University and Cancer Council Australia, with support from Grampians Health and cancer clinicians across the country.

It directly addresses recommendations from the 2023 Australian Cancer Plan, which identifies people in rural and remote areas as one of 10 priority populations requiring dedicated support.

The goal is to develop a tailored Optimal Care Pathway (OCP) that addresses the specific needs and challenges faced by rural cancer patients. OCPs are nationally recognised guides to best practice cancer care across each stage of a patient's journey.

A dedicated rural-focused version will support more equitable care by tackling barriers such as limited access to specialists, long travel times, and financial stress.

Launched in September 2024, the 18-month project is currently in the working group stage, bringing together experienced cancer care professionals from across Australia to co-design the new rural OCP.

"Equitable cancer care in rural and remote areas is vital," said Carmel O'Kane, Cancer Nurse Practitioner and Manager of the Wimmera Cancer Centre, who is serving as Deputy Chair of the project's national working group.

Oncology Nurse Practitioner Sue Bartlett and Social Worker Catherine Hanns have also joined the national working group, bringing with them years of experience working with cancer patients across regional Victoria.

"Many of our patients face huge barriers including distance, cost, social isolation, and lack of transport and this impacts their ability to access timely, appropriate treatment," said Catherine.

"This project provides an opportunity to advocate for rural patients and ensure their needs are built into a national healthcare framework," said Sue.

Once completed, the ECORRA OCP will provide a valuable national resource to guide clinicians, on how to improve access to services, and provide treatment closer to home delivering more equitable cancer care for rural and remote Australians.

# Helping Communities Thrive

Grampians Health strives to deliver quality care for all our communities through safe, accessible and connected health services.

## Emergency Department

For emergencies arising from accident or illness. Services are available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

**If your condition is serious, or you are experiencing chest pains, you need to call 000 (Triple Zero) for an ambulance.**

## Acute Care

24 hour care, managed by our experienced nursing staff and visiting medical officers.

## Care Communities

Kurrajong Lodge

**5581 9271**

Wimmera Nursing Home

**5381 9307**

## Horsham Maternity Clinic

**5381 9010**

## Community Options

**5381 9336**

Assisting people and their carers to live independently in their own homes.

## Allied Health

**5381 9333**

Allied Health resources are based in the Arapiles Building. Services available include:

- Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Speech Pathology
- Social Work
- Dental and Prosthetic Clinic

## Alan Wolff Medical Clinic

**5581 9167**

A specialist medical clinic servicing the needs of patients in Horsham and the surrounding districts.

## Primary Health

Community based services which are delivered to the wider community.

- District Nursing 5381 9391
- Hospital in the Home 5381 9311
- Continence Service 5381 9333
- Memory Support Service 5381 9333
- Post Acute Care 5382 3419
- Residential in Reach 5381 9115
- Complex Care (HARP) 5381 9115

## Day Centre

**5381 9285**

Offers a welcoming, supportive environment for our older community and for people with dementia and/or disabilities to maintain personal independence and provide support for their carers.

## Dental Clinic

**5381 9248**

Treats patients who hold a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card and children under 13 without a concession.

## Radiology

**5381 9236**

Lumus Imaging, a private company provides medical imaging for the hospital and the Wimmera region. Services include Radiography, Computer Tomography, Mammography, Ultrasound, MRI, Echocardiography, DEXA and OPG (Orthopanthomogram).

## Wimmera Cancer Centre

**5381 9169**

Oncology service, incorporating Dialysis and Palliative Care.



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We are committed to working with the communities in which we live and we value your feedback.

For the full range of services and more detail on accessing the services please visit [www.whcg.org.au](http://www.whcg.org.au)